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2006 Annual School and District Ratings Discussion Points

Based on data received from SDE, October 30, 2006 and November 7, 2006.

Ratings

Absolute Ratings

Overall, the 2006 school ratings reveal an increase in the number of schools rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory*. 306 schools (78.5%) rated *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average* this year have been rated at that level at some point between 2001 and 2005. 84 schools were rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* for the first time this year.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	71 (6%)	50 (5%)	46 (4%)	28 (3%)	65 (6%)	140 (13%)
<i>Below Average</i>	200 (18%)	159 (15%)	150 (14%)	160 (15%)	222 (20%)	250 (23%)

There were changes to school absolute ratings from 2005 to 2006 in the following manner:

"Improvers": 65 schools elevated their ratings –
- 20 of the *Improvers* are high schools, none are middle schools.

"Maintainers": 711 schools maintained their ratings

"Sliders": 326 schools lowered their ratings –
- 2 schools dropped 3 ratings, 32 schools dropped 2 ratings, and 292 schools dropped 1 rating.
- 89 of the 326 (27%) *"Sliders"* are high schools.

South Carolina's Students – 2006

14.7% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Excellent*.

25.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Good*.

30.7% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Average*.

19.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Below Average*.

9.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory*.

District Absolute Ratings

- This year, 11 school districts are rated *Unsatisfactory*, up from 5 in 2005 and 1 in 2004. Three school districts – Aiken, Orangeburg 3, and York 3 -- are not rated currently.

Career and Technology Center Absolute Ratings

- Absolute ratings for Career and Technology Centers, as well as special schools, are not included in the overall "snapshot" of the ratings. However, 76% of the 38 Career and Technology Centers are rated *Excellent*. None are rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory*.

Improvement Ratings

- There were changes to school improvement ratings from 2005 to 2006 in the following manner:
 - 286 schools elevated their rating
 - 425 schools maintained their rating
 - 356 schools earned lower improvement ratings
- The number of elementary schools with an Improvement rating of *Excellent* went up to 38, from 34 in 2005. Eighty-three percent of middle schools earned an Improvement rating of *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* in 2006, the same percentage as 2005.
- Of the 386 schools with an improvement rating of *Unsatisfactory* in 2005, 18.9% earned *Average* or above improvement ratings in 2006. 24.1% of schools rated *Below Average* in 2005 earned *Average* or above improvement ratings in 2006.
- 170 schools (up from 153 schools in 2005) benefited from the incentive for improving the performance of historically underachieving student groups. When these groups of students demonstrate gains greater than the average gains for all students statewide, the school's improvement ratings are elevated one level.

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Student Performance

- Flat or declining PACT scores show low student achievement. Performance in the middle grades (grades 6-8) is significantly lower than in the elementary grades (grades 3-5). Also, student performance in Social Studies and Science is lower than performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.

2006 PACT Performance

	Elementary (Grades 3-5) % <i>Basic or Above</i>	Middle (Grades 6-8) % <i>Basic or Above</i>	Elementary (Grades 3-5) % <i>Proficient or Advanced</i>	Middle (Grades 6-8) % <i>Proficient or Advanced</i>
ELA	82.7%	70.7%	43.5%	27.2%
Math	78.4%	72.9%	36.7%	30.1%
Science	61.7%	56.4%	27.1%	24.1%
Social Studies	71.4%	63.0%	31.1%	24.1%

Does not include students tested off level or with PACT-Alt.

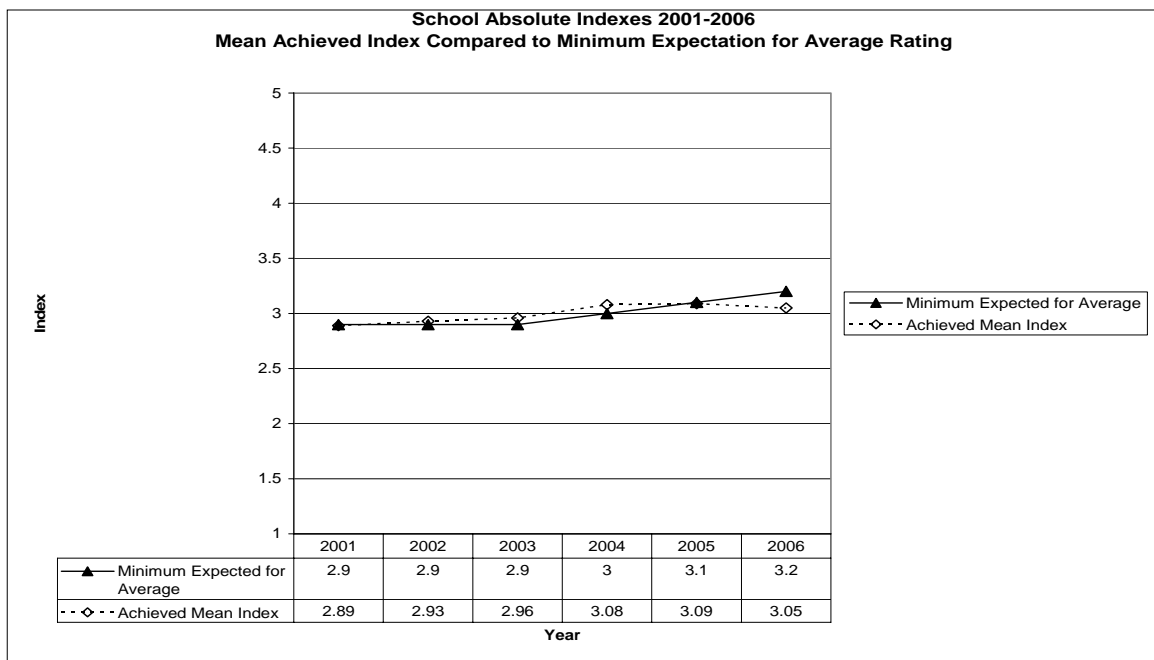
Revisions to Rating Calculations

This year, a number of additions were made to the calculation of the Absolute and Improvement ratings, which factor into an analysis of the ratings.

Year two of Inclusion of PACT Science and Social Studies in the Ratings for Elementary and Middle Schools

- This is the fourth year Social Studies and Science have been tested on the PACT and 2006 is the second year results have been included in the calculation of the ratings. The results are being phased in over a three-year period and the weighting will increase each year (5 percentage points per year) until the target weightings are achieved in school year 2006-2007. This year, Science absolute rating weights are set at 15% for elementary schools and 20% for middle schools. Social Studies absolute rating weights are set at 15% for elementary schools and 20% for middle schools.

Increase in Expectations (Rigor)



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- Designed as a system to encourage and reward continuous improvement in South Carolina's public schools, the rigor of the absolute performance ratings increased last year by one-tenth of a point on a five-point scale. This year, the rigor increased an additional one-tenth of a point.
- Our analysis shows that the increase in the rigor affected 75 schools, meaning 7% of schools were "caught in the rigor." Of the 75 schools, 30 are rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory*.

Confronting Poverty

Note: Numbers of schools will vary within data sets. Data provided from the SC Office of Research and Statistics includes information from schools that may not have received a report card or received more than one report card, depending on their school structure.

Poverty and Absolute Ratings

- Significant poverty exists in the majority of South Carolina schools. Only 6% of schools have fewer than one-third of their students living in poverty (64 of 1116 schools).
- Only 53 schools (4%) serve a population of 30% poverty or less.
- The number of schools in poverty is increasing. Of 1087 schools which had poverty indexes in both 2005 and 2006, 795 (73%) showed an increase in the poverty index.
- Over half (53%) of all South Carolina schools have at least 70% of their students living in poverty. This percentage has increased from 2005, when 50% of all schools were affected. In 2004, 48% were affected.
- Almost one out of 5 schools (19%) serves a population of students in very high poverty (90% or more.)

2006 Absolute Rating	Average Poverty Index
Excellent	47.0% (n=129)
Good	56.3% (n=238)
Average	69.8% (n=348)
Below Average	82.4% (n=249)
Unsatisfactory	90.3% (n=140)

In 2006, 9% of schools with a poverty composite of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*; that percentage has dropped from 2005, when 12.6% of schools with a 80% or greater poverty composite earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

2006 School Ratings Poverty Levels Across Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools Report Cards

	Extent of Poverty (Poverty Index)		
	High Poverty (70%+)	Very High Poverty (80%+)	Extreme Poverty (90%+)
Total Number of Report Cards (% of 1106 Report Cards)	599 (54.2%)	402 (36.3%)	215 (19.4%)
Number of Report Cards with Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings in 2006	76 (12.7%) In 2005: 97 (17.4%)	36 (9.0%) In 2005: 47 (12.6%)	14 (6.5%) In 2005: 14 (7.3%)

Poverty by Organizational Level – Absolute Ratings

Primary and elementary schools constitute a disproportionately-larger percentage of those schools with extreme poverty rates. Primary and elementary schools represent 57.4% of all schools, but 70.8% of schools with a Poverty Index of 90% or greater.

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Elementary

- 2.5% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 9.2% in 2005 and 21.9% in 2004. 6.0% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

Middle Schools

- Poverty presents a great challenge for middle schools. In 2006, no middle schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good* while 93.7% of these schools earned an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average*.

High Schools

- 14.6% of high schools with a poverty level of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 20.5% in 2005.

Poverty by Organizational Level – Improvement Ratings

One in five schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater have improvement ratings of *Excellent* or *Good*.

16.5% of all schools (primary, elementary, middle, and high) with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, while 19.4% of schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, and 20.6% of schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

2006 Improvement Rating	Average Poverty Index
Excellent	62.3% (n=74)
Good	62.3% (n=182)
Average	67.3% (n=105)
Below Average	69.5% (n=268)
Unsatisfactory	74.3% (n=461)

Persistent Questions

1. Are students taught the content standards on grade level?
2. Does technical assistance build local capacity that can be sustained over time?
3. What is the impact of low reading skills on student performance in other content areas?
4. How can we recover students who enter middle school performing below grade level?
5. How do we close early achievement gaps and keep them closed as students move through school?

Investments in Improvement

Education Oversight Committee

1. The EOC is meeting with education leaders to discuss the challenges at the middle grades.
2. The EOC is creating a searchable internet database providing the public access to comprehensive data about schools and districts.
3. The EOC's national technical advisors will meet in February 2007 to study the statistical calculations and patterns within them.
4. The EOC funding model has been revised to demonstrate how current resources can be redirected based upon student achievement.

State Dept. of Education

1. The SDE is developing an extensive online library of resources to assist teachers in day-to-day classroom instruction.
2. The SDE is piloting South Carolina's first "virtual high school," designed to help students who have trouble keeping up in class, accelerate learning for gifted students, and provide Advanced Placement courses for rural areas that don't have enough students to support these classes.
3. The SDE is requesting funds for a statewide "formative assessment", a system that districts could use to supply classroom teachers with diagnostic data on individual students.
4. The SDE is expanding the Teacher Advancement Program, a proven method of recruiting and retaining good teachers in hard-to-staff schools.
5. State Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum is pushing to expand full-day kindergarten to serve all at-risk four-year-olds across the state.

Policy Challenges

2006 Profile Data

Schools with lower ratings have, on average, fewer teachers with advanced degrees and more teachers with emergency or provisional certificates.

In particular, schools with a 2006 Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory had, on average, over three times as many teachers on emergency or provisional certificates as schools rated Excellent or Good.

	Advanced Degrees	Emergency or Provisional Certificates
Unsatisfactory (133 schools)	50.5%	14.3%
Below Average (247 schools)	51.7%	6.1%
Average (345 schools)	53.6%	3.3%
Good (237 schools)	54.8%	3.3%
Excellent (127 schools)	57.3%	3.6%

Schools with lower ratings have, on average, fewer teachers returning from the previous year.

	Returning
Unsatisfactory (124 schools)	77.8%
Below Average (237 schools)	83.5%
Average (333 schools)	86.6%
Good (229 schools)	87.4%
Excellent (118 schools)	88.3%

Schools with lower ratings, on average, pay teachers less than schools with higher ratings. In particular, schools with an Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory paid their teachers over \$3,530 less on average than schools with an Absolute Rating of Excellent.

	Average Teacher Salaries
Unsatisfactory (133 schools)	\$40,330
Below Average (247 schools)	\$41,680
Average (345 schools)	\$42,586
Good (236 schools)	\$43,316
Excellent (127 schools)	\$43,860

Schools with lower ratings have fewer students enrolled, a lower student-teacher ratio and a higher per pupil expenditure than schools with higher ratings.

	Number of Students Enrolled	Student-Teacher Ratio	Expenditure per Student
Unsatisfactory (139 schools)	477.4	19.1 (n=136)	\$8,263 (n=134)
Below Average (249 schools)	546.5	19.0 (n=247)	\$6,917 (n=247)
Average (346 schools)	619.4	20.1 (n=345)	\$6,595 (n=345)
Good (238 schools)	747.4	21.4 (n=237)	\$6,574 (n=237)
Excellent (129 schools)	796.5	21.7	\$6,742 (n=127)

In schools with lower ratings, on average, student and teacher attendance rates are lower, as is prime instructional time, compared to schools with higher ratings.

	Student Attendance Rate	Teacher Attendance Rate	Prime Instructional Time
Unsatisfactory (139 schools)	95.0%	94.6% (n=134)	87.4% (n=134)
Below Average (249 schools)	96.0%	94.5% (n=248)	88.6% (n=248)
Average (347 schools)	96.2%	94.8% (n=345)	89.4% (n=345)
Good (238 schools)	96.3%	95.1%	90.1%
Excellent (129 schools)	96.4%	95.1%	90.0%

Schools with lower ratings, on average, retain more students and have fewer students eligible for gifted and talented programs than schools with higher ratings.

In particular, schools with a 2006 Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory, on average, retained almost twice as many students and had one-fourth as many students eligible for gifted and talented programs as schools rated Excellent.

	Student Retention	Eligible for Gifted and Talented	Teachers Returning
Unsatisfactory (139 schools)	6.7%	6.0%	77.8% (n=124)
Below Average (249 schools)	4.0%	8.9%	83.5%
Average (347 schools)	3.6%	13.3% (n=347)	86.6% (n=333)
Good (238 schools)	3.4%	17.2%	87.4% (n=229)
Excellent (129 schools)	3.7%	24.4% (n=100)	88.3% (n=118)

